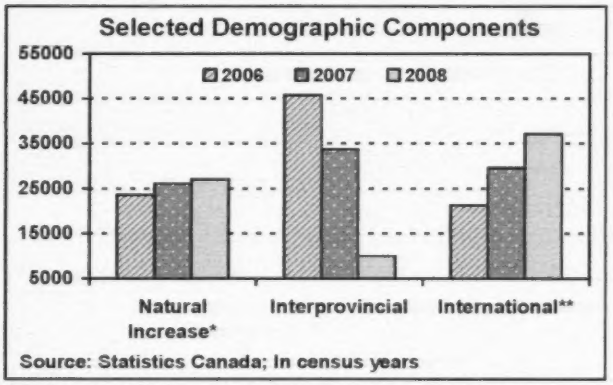
## Demographics

***Alberta's population growth continues to outpace the rest of the nation…***

As of July 1st, Alberta's population reached 3.6 million, representing an annual growth of 2.1%. This is the highest growth among provinces but slower than in 2007 and 2006 census years. The increase was largely attributed to strong inflows of international migrants and non-permanent residents, which both reached record levels in the 2008 census year (June 30, 2007 to July 1, 2008). This helped offset the slowdown in net interprovincial migration. Nationally, population growth stood at 1.2%.




* Births minus deaths, ** Includes non-permanent residents

## Principal Field Crops

***Increased crop production expected in 2008…***

Alberta farmers are expecting wheat (except durum) production to reach 7.2 million tonnes in 2008, up 33% from 2007 level. Other crops are also expected to see higher production this year, including canola (+10%).

## Rigs Drilling

***Drilling activity picking up…***

The average number of rigs drilling in Alberta rose for the second straight month in September, up 6.9% from the same month last year. Year-to-date, the number of rigs drilling has fallen 3.8%, a significant improvement from the 35.2% decline recorded in all of 2007.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Cdn Dollar (US¢/C$)** | | |
| ⇩ | October 3, 2008 | 92.5 |
| | September 26, 2008 | 96.6 |
| | 2008-09 YTD | 97.5 |
| **WTI Oil US$/bbl** | | |
| ⇩ | October 2, 2008 | $ 93.97 |
| | September 25, 2008 | $ 108.02 |
| | 2008-09 YTD | $ 120.63 |
| **Nymex Natural Gas C$/MMBtu*** | | |
| ⇧ | **October Contract** | |
| | October 3, 2008 | $ 7.93 |
| | September 26, 2008 | $ 7.63 |

*Estimate based on Nymex Futures Market Price

## Canadian Real GDP

***Real GDP rises for the second straight month…***

In July, Canada's real gross domestic product advanced by 0.7% from June due to higher output in energy (+4.2%), manufacturing (+1.3%), and wholesale trade (+1.9%). The increase in energy output was largely due to the completion of maintenance in oil production facilities in Eastern and Western Canada.

## Other Developments

***Latest string of data paints a gloomy U.S. economic outlook…***

The U.S. economy shed 159,000 jobs in September, marking its ninth straight month of decline. Year-to-date, U.S. employment fell 760,000. The unemployment rate remained at its five–year high of 6.1%. New factory orders also tumbled 4% in August, while the ISM manufacturing index shrank to 43.5 in September, the lowest since the 2001 recession. A reading below 50 indicates a contraction

This latest string of weak data heightened the urgency for U.S. Congress to take action and eventually led to today's approval of the $700-billion rescue plan.

Despite this positive development, oil prices remained unsettled over concerns that a slowing U.S. economy will undermine energy demand.